

January 1994

CODE OF ETHICS

Each midwife shall act, at all times, in such a manner as to justify public trust and confidence, to uphold and enhance the good standing and reputation of the profession, to serve the interest of society, and above all to safeguard the interests of individual clients.*

Each midwife is accountable for her practice, and, in the exercise of professional accountability, shall:

1. Always act in such a way as to promote and safeguard the well-being of clients, advocating their interests.
2. Clearly inform and educate clients and the public as to the role, function, standards and philosophy of midwifery practice.
3. Respect clients' right to informed choice.
4. Provide care which respects individuals' needs, values and dignity, and does not discriminate on the basis of language, culture, age, economic status, health status, sexual orientation, marital status, gender, geographic location, institutionalization, ability, race or religion.
5. Clearly inform clients and other health care practitioners of scope and limitations of midwifery practice.
6. Avoid any abuse of the privileged relationship which exists with clients. Such a relationship allows privileged access to the person, property or residence of the client as well as to personal practices or customs of the client.
7. Refrain from disclosing confidential information obtained in the course of professional practice without the consent of the client or a person entitled to act on her behalf, except where disclosure is required by law or by the order of a court.
8. Ensure that no action or omission on her part or within her sphere of influence is detrimental to the condition or safety of clients. A midwife will never engage in the practice of midwifery while the ability to perform any professional service is impaired by alcohol or a drug.
9. Openly acknowledge to clients and health care practitioners any conscientious objection or conflict of interest which may affect professional practice or the client's right to informed choice.

10. In addition to seeking consultation or referral in accordance with the standards of practice consult or refer when requested by the client or when the midwife finds assessment or treatment is not clear.
11. Assist clients to find appropriate alternate care if for any reason she finds herself unable to provide care.
12. Attempt to provide the best possible care under any circumstance. A midwife may not refuse to attend a client in the course of labour notwithstanding #9.
13. Build a professional reputation based upon her ability and integrity and only advertise professional services or make professional announcements according to local midwifery custom.
14. Avoid the use of professional qualifications in the promotion of commercial products, in order to maintain the independence of professional judgement on which clients rely.
15. Refuse to accept any gift, favour or hospitality which might be interpreted as either professional endorsement of a commercial product or seeking to obtain preferential consideration as a client.
16. Have regard to the environment of health care and its physical, psychological and social effects on clients, and to the adequacy of resources. Make known to appropriate persons or authorities any circumstances which could place clients in jeopardy.
17. Assume responsibility for reporting health care practitioners whose actions might endanger the safety of clients.
18. Take every reasonable opportunity to maintain and improve professional knowledge and competence.
19. Facilitate research in midwifery practice.
20. In the context of her knowledge, experience and sphere of authority, assist health care practitioners and students to develop and maintain professional competence in accordance with their needs.